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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Smith, Curt, Files
Subseries: Chron File, 1989-1992

OA/ID Number: 13890
Folder ID Number: 13890-014

Folder Title:
Bush-Quayle Event, 5/92

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
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[May 1992]

There's been a lot of talk about change this election year. But the American people are tired of sweet talk and small change. America has changed the world -- and now we must change America.

Without pointing fingers or casting blame, ask yourselves: is the system we've got right now working? Is it eliminating poverty \ providing opportunity \ generating jobs \ creating hope? We all know it's not. The man who founded our party also gave us our mission: it is time "to think...and act anew."

Lincoln knew when the questions of the "stormy present" had outlived the "dogmas of the quiet past." / Some still prefer the comforting dogmas of quieter times. For four years we've fought for change -- pleaded and pushed, begged and bullied to get our initiatives through Congress. We saw what happened: when we rocked the boat -- they cut the engines. When we set course -- they dropped anchor. This time the choice is clear: either get on board or get out of the way. /

Just a few short weeks ago, the "stormy present" erupted in a thunder no quiet dogma could quell. We all saw the fire and violence that rained on Los Angeles. But I went there. And what I saw -- even in the hardest-hit parts of South Central L.A. -- should give us all cause for hope. As I walked the streets and spoke with the people of South Central, I heard the same words again and again: Personal responsibility. Opportunity. Ownership. Independence. Dignity. We know these words. They're not just the guts and glory of the Republican Party -- they're the heart and soul of the American Dream.

As Republicans, we agree: we must rebuild our house on the rock of Republican faith. On principles that tell us we must keep power where it belongs -- close to the people. That we must strengthen families -- set an example for our young people. That we must increase opportunity and create new jobs. / These principles tell us that the challenges we face go deeper than the crisis in Los Angeles -- that beyond emergency aid, we've got to bring hope and opportunity -- not just to neighborhoods in South Central Los Angeles -- but to neighborhoods right here in _____ and all across this country. That was the message I gave congressional leaders -- Republican and Democrat -- when I called them to the White House two weeks ago and outlined my six-point plan for a new America.

Square One: we've got to keep the peace. Families can't thrive -- children can't learn -- and jobs can't flourish in a combat zone. People can't take aim at their problems when they're too busy dodging bullets -- it's just that simple. The kind of violence we saw in L.A. should not be explained / it cannot be excused / and it must be condemned.

We start with an idea I call "Weed and Seed." First, you "weed out" the gang leaders, drug dealers and career criminals - - and then "seed" the community with expanded employment, educational and social services. This is new -- it is tough -- and it's going to help people take back the streets / take back the neighborhoods / take back control of their lives. /

Next, we've got to rebuild the community -- with investment / with opportunity / with hope. That means Enterprise Zones for our inner cities. / It means private sector activity: Not government make-work -- but real jobs in real businesses. /

Third, we've got to reform the welfare system. We've got to replace the perverse dis-incentives that penalize welfare families for working \ for saving \ for staying together. \ That's wrong and it's got to change.

Next, we need a strong jobs program for city youth -- ideas like our Youth Apprenticeship Initiative and Job Training 2000.

Fifth: we must revolutionize American education -- that's the idea behind our America 2000 strategy. Whether it's public or private or religious, parents -- not the government -- have a right to choose their children's schools. //

Finally, we must promote new hope through home ownership. I've never understood how anyone could take pride in warehousing the poor. Our HOPE initiative gives poor families a stake in their communities -- something to pass on to their children. It's just this simple: HOPE can turn housing into homes.

Now, we all know what the critics say: "you've proposed all this before." That's true -- but these ideas have not been tried. Now is the time to act. There will be gridlock in Washington as long as there are roadblocks in Congress. //

But what's going on in urban America is just one part of a larger issue -- because the need for reform and new ideas doesn't end where the suburbs begin. //

Look at the big picture: Our revolution in education isn't just about helping inner city students -- it's about helping all students: from kindergarten to college.

Reform means taking action to break down barriers to free trade -- to create new jobs for American workers by opening new markets to American goods. //

Reform means taking on America's legal system -- putting an end to these outrageous court awards that strain our civility and sap our economy. We need reform, we need it now, and no lobby of trial lawyers will stand in the way. //

We've proposed health care reform. Our plan will keep America first in the world in high-quality health care. At the same time, it will open up access to all Americans. Through pooling, and other new measures we can make insurance available to all. Contrary to what the big government folks say -- we don't have to socialize our health care system. Let's face it: National health care would be a national disaster -- and this President won't let it happen. //

Finally, we've got to bring the reform process to government. In Washington, we've got to get our own house in order. To restore fiscal discipline to the federal government, I challenge Congress to get moving on a balanced budget amendment.

I've been speaking about what government can do -- but government alone cannot solve our problems. / Government may be able to make good laws, but it's never been able to make men good. That doesn't come from Big Brother -- it comes from

mother, and father and family. I'm talking about the moral sense that must guide us all. In the simplest terms -- I'm talking about knowing what's wrong -- and doing what's right. //

Go back to Los Angeles for a minute. Time and again the people I met there put their finger on one root cause of the riots: the declining influence of the family. / They're right. Ask yourself: What keeps a kid in school / away from drugs / off the streets? It's not government spending -- or the number of SBA loans or HUD grants. It's whether kids live in a home where they are loved, and cared for, and kept on the right path.

The Silver Fox said it best: what happens in the White House doesn't matter half as much as what happens in your house.

I believe this. That's why I've made it my mission as President to put the American family first. / That's why I keep coming back to the Good Samaritans I call Points of Light: people who help others in need -- and never ask a nickel in return. Government alone can't transform the lives of people in need. Let the cynics laugh: We know that our country is great because our people are good. //

I believe in the Republican Party -- because I believe in Republican principles. We are right about family -- about freedom and free enterprise. We are right about faith. And most of all, we are right about America's future. Thank you for your warm welcome and for your strong support. And may God bless the United States of America.

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